

Art

Edited by Eddy Frankel
timeout.com/art @timeoutart

WHO THE HELL IS

Ashley
Bickerton

The American artist is getting a major show at Damien Hirst's Newport Street Gallery. Here's our primer on the man

He's an original maverick of 1980s art

Back in the '80s, Bickerton showed his early work alongside mates like Jeff Koons, Peter Halley and Meyer Veisman – a little gang that got christened 'Neo-Geo', short for neo-geometric conceptualism, obv's. Bickerton was a bit like a post-pop ideas guy at this point, creating big assemblages out of brand logos and signatures. It was commercialism as self-portraiture, brand theft as art.

He has some serious wanderlust

Born in Barbados, Bickerton settled with his family in Hawaii, went to school in California and eventually headed to New York to kick off his art career. But the struggles of city life as a lowly artist, and a hankering for the call of the sea, sent him off in search of endless sunshine and perfect surf. The poor soul ended up in Bali during the '90s, where he's lived ever since, a recluse and semi-outsider to the art world.

He's mates with Damien Hirst

This major show is taking place at Damien Hirst's massive Newport Street Gallery in Vauxhall. The two have been close for decades now, swapping art the whole time, and Damo has acquired quite the collection. Some of the pieces on display in the show were even acquired by Hirst years ago, before they were finished, and sent over to Bickerton in Bali to complete.

And he's a total eco-warrior

Bickerton's move to Indonesia set in motion a shift away from the whole post-pop big ideas thing, and his work took on a hyper-real, ultra-exaggerated feel, tackling topics like environmentalism, genetics and spiritualism. It's got more than a touch of the visual Marmites to it, but it's an aesthetic that's all Bickerton's own. Whether you love it or hate

it, the sunshine spilling out of Newport Street Gallery should help keep London warm for a couple of months. ■

→ Newport Street Gallery. © Vauxhall. Fri Apr 21-Aug 20. Free.



By Eddy Frankel
Who thought 'Neo-Geo' was something to do with 'The Matrix' and longshore drift.



ART BY: THE FIGURE IN COLOUR IS SHIRLEY BICKERTON'S 'COLOURS OF THE FUTURE' (2004). THE FIGURE IN COLOUR IS SHIRLEY BICKERTON'S 'COLOURS OF THE FUTURE' (2004). THE FIGURE IN COLOUR IS SHIRLEY BICKERTON'S 'COLOURS OF THE FUTURE' (2004). THE FIGURE IN COLOUR IS SHIRLEY BICKERTON'S 'COLOURS OF THE FUTURE' (2004). THE FIGURE IN COLOUR IS SHIRLEY BICKERTON'S 'COLOURS OF THE FUTURE' (2004).